

# **YESTERYEARS**

A publication of

**The Jefferson County  
Historical Society**

**October 2023**

## CONTENTS – October 2023

In Memoriam: R. Steve Dick (1947-2023) .....	3
John Steuart Curry's Boyhood Home at Old Jefferson Town .....	5
Early Days in Nortonville: The 1800s .....	6
Long Lost Son .....	11
Spurlock/Fairmont/Fairmount District No. 41 School, Kentucky Township, Jefferson County, KS .....	12
Smoky Hill Route .....	13
Soap Bubble Party .....	13
Plan to Improve Highway .....	13
Too Late for Probate .....	13
Cedar Creek Chivari .....	13
Trio 'Got Some Love' 95 Years Ago.....	14
Emancipation Celebrations: From Watch Night to Juneteenth .....	17
Rural Rest Home Was on a Roll in '53 .....	19
Too Much Is Plenty .....	19
She Was a Spy of Sorts .....	20
Desperadoes Strike Nortonville Business, 1881 .....	21
Early Reminiscences of North-Eastern Kansas in 1857 by Isaac Maris .....	23
Jefferson County, Kansas, Map, 1878 .....	25
Millinery on Display at Old Jefferson Town .....	26

*Yesteryears* is published online as a PDF document and made available on the Jefferson County Historical Society website: Publications (under the "Research" tab): <https://www.jchsk.com/newsletters>

Individual articles from past issues of *Yesteryears* are posted online in the Yesteryears blog (under the "More" tab): <https://www.jchsk.com/yesteryears> and at [storiesofyesteryears.blogspot.com](https://storiesofyesteryears.blogspot.com)

Follow our pages for news and updates: [www.facebook.com/JCHSKS](https://www.facebook.com/JCHSKS) and [www.facebook.com/OldJeffersonTownKS](https://www.facebook.com/OldJeffersonTownKS)

Join our group for sharing and discussion: [www.facebook.com/groups/JCHSKS](https://www.facebook.com/groups/JCHSKS)

Explore the resources of the Jefferson County Historical Society website: <https://www.jchsk.com/>

For more information, or to volunteer, contact the Jefferson County Historical Society, P.O. Box 146, Oskaloosa, KS 66066, email, [oldjefftown@gmail.com](mailto:oldjefftown@gmail.com)



*The Jefferson County Historical Society manages and maintains Old Jefferson Town historical museum, a collection of historical buildings from various locations across the county. Left: Visitors to OJT in July 2006. Photo by R. Steve Dick.*

## In Memoriam: R. Steve Dick (1947-2023)

Robert Stephan (Steve) Dick, 76, passed away suddenly on July 6, 2023, at his home near Perry, with his wife by his side.

Steve was born in Great Bend, Kansas, on June 23, 1947. He was the son of Robert A. and Betty Nowlin Dick. Steve attended Ellinwood Schools and was a proud graduate of the Class of 1965, Ellinwood High School. Steve was a member of the Argonne Rebels Drum and Bugle Corps, Great Bend. He was a veteran of the U.S. Army, serving in the Southern Command Network, Panama. He had been an active member of several Corvette Clubs, and he and his wife enjoyed auto crossing Steve's 1970 Chevy Corvette. He also was an active and charter member of the Free State Fly Fishers in Lawrence. He is a graduate of Fort Hays State University and the University of Kansas.

He married Margaret Bergin on August 29, 1976, in Emporia, Kansas. She survives, of the home. He is also survived by his two children, Amy (Lance) Hoover and Matthew (Ashley) Dick, three granddaughters Addison Hoover, Brynlynn Hoover and Harper Dick, all of Lawrence. He is also survived by his lifelong friend, Larry Griffin, of Overland Park.

Steve was a photojournalist for the University of Kansas for three decades. He loved photographing the Jayhawks. He was an avid fly fisherman, and he loved reading and following his Jayhawks, no matter what sport was playing.

Steve's smiling face was often the first one you saw on a visit to Old Jefferson Town until his health intervened. He regularly opened the museum buildings, answered questions, greeted visitors, did clean up and maintenance projects along with many other things that he just saw needed to be done and did them. Many of Steve's photos are featured in this issue of *Yesteryears*.

The family suggests memorial contributions to your local Humane Society, Jefferson County Historical Society, Oskaloosa, or Ellinwood Historical Society, Ellinwood, Kansas.



*Photo by Margaret Dick.*



*Haying with horses at Old Jefferson Town, June 2015. Photo by R. Steve Dick.*





*Tractor drive at Old Jefferson Town, August 2013. Photo by R. Steve Dick.*



*Left: The Nincehelter house. William and Winnie Nincehelter raised four daughters in their home near Oskaloosa's square. The house and most of its contents were moved to Old Jefferson Town in 1980. It has been restored and houses family memorabilia and photographs. Right: The stove in the Nincehelter house kitchen. Photos by R. Steve Dick.*

To view these photos in color, please visit <https://www.jchsk.com/newsletters> and download the PDF version of the Fall 2023 issue of *Yesteryears*.



## John Steuart Curry's Boyhood Home at Old Jefferson Town

Native Kansas artist **John Steuart Curry** was born in 1897. He was an American Regionalist painter and a Kansas State Capital muralist. Curry consistently used Kansas themes in his paintings depicting rural life and its hardships. His rendition of abolitionist **John Brown** was classic. This house was John Steuart Curry's 1900 boyhood home. It was relocated from Dunavant, Kansas, in 1990. The home was placed on the Register of Historic Kansas places in 1997, 100 years after Curry's birth.



*Left: The Curry house in Dunavant. Photo courtesy of Jefferson County Historical Society.  
Right: The Curry family bible at OJT. Photo by R. Steve Dick.*



*The restored Curry house at Old Jefferson Town. Photo by R. Steve Dick.*

## Early Days in Nortonville: The 1800s

In 1873, **T.L. Norton** was a roadmaster on the crew building the Santa Fe railroad from Atchison to Topeka, Kansas, and on to Santa Fe, New Mexico. His favorite parking spot for his railroad car was a siding on a hill in northern Jefferson County. The crew called it "Norton's Place." When the spot became home to a hopeful little town, the name stuck.

From the *Oskaloosa Independent*, Mar. 15, 1890: "The history of Nortonville begins about May 1873, at which time it was surveyed by the Arkansas Valley Town Co. Shortly after this, **John Taggart**, the first settler, came and brought a small stock of goods, intending to open a store. He pitched a tent, and in June was appointed postmaster and had the office in his tent. During the following year the country was rapidly settled, but the town grew but little. During the year four more buildings were erected and grain-buying was carried on. All the summer it was desired that they should form a school-district and build a school-house, but legally there were not enough voters, therefore they waited until fall, when an election was called, bonds voted and a school-house costing \$1500 was erected, **Miss Lucy Gale** of Leavenworth teaching the first term."

John Taggart completed a building for his store and post office by June 1873, when rail service began. **Rev. H.D. Fisher** of Atchison preached the town's first sermon. John Taggart organized a Union Sunday School in June. A railroad depot was built by September, with Taggart as agent. Several more buildings followed, and grain buying and shipping began.

In May 1874, a correspondent calling herself "A School Girl" wrote to the *Independent*: "Nortonville, as you and your readers already know, is a new town.—Now it boasts of fifteen dwelling houses, one school house, a dry goods store, a drug and grocery store, one blacksmith shop, one hotel, a depot with express and telegraph offices attached, three doctors and *only one undertaker*. Now, add to all this a colored wedding, and you have Nortonville in a nutshell. The bride constituted the colored population of the city. The gentleman to whom she gave her hand and heart came from Michigan. The happy pair started for their home in that State Sunday morning. May happiness attend them."

By September 1874, the *Grass Hopper and New Era* newspaper of Grasshopper [Valley] Falls carried a full column of Nortonville advertisements. **Dr. T.D. Cummings**, physician and surgeon, offered his services "to the citizens of Nortonville and the country surrounding" with an office at Webb's drug store. **John Taggart** sold dry goods, groceries, boots and shoes, hats and caps, clothing, hardware, agricultural implements, and field and garden seeds ("warranted fresh"). **Robert Neely**, carpenter and undertaker, furnished plans and specifications on short notice and erected houses on contract ("Also Coffins made to order"). **Edward Smith** established a paint shop. **B.F. Payne** and **John C. Haines** manufactured wagons and coaches. **R.D. Webb** and **J.R. Eckles** sold groceries and "a full line of pure drugs, medicines, patent medicines." **G.H. Stout's** Nortonville Lumber Yard offered pine and native lumber and red and black Fort Scott coal.

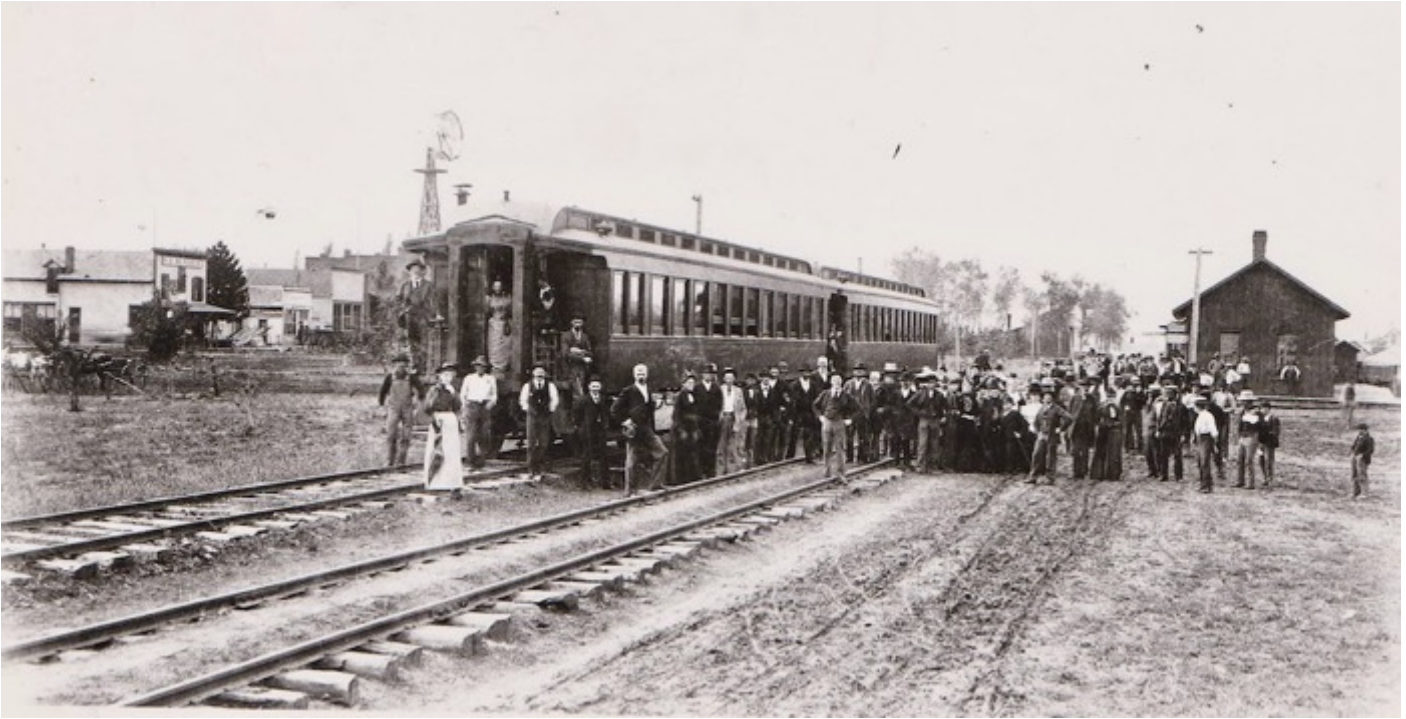
Grasshoppers invaded the farming community in 1874. Nortonville responded by baling wild prairie grasses and shipping nearly 3,000 tons of hay on the new railroad. Hay continued to be a profitable crop after conditions improved, and the railroad proved a lifeline. In October 1875, the *Valley Falls New Era* reported, "During the month of September there were shipped from Nortonville four cars of cattle; one car of household goods; one car of oats; three cars of wheat; thirteen cars of hay, 53,016 pounds. . . Hay pressing has been going on lively for the last two weeks. **S.C. Hart** has shipped eight carloads; **[Oliver] Davis & [O.W.] Babcock**, four; **J.C. Sprague**, three; **Brundige Bro's.**, one."

From the beginning, the railroad was a community affair. When an April snowstorm buried the track in 1876, Nortonville correspondent "Mazeppa" reported in the *Oskaloosa Independent*: "The railroad track is entirely drifted under in the deep cuts on both sides of town. The plucky little engine of the morning train bound for Topeka, has been puffing and blowing and exerting all its strength, combined with the assistance of another locomotive, all day in sight of town, trying to push its way through the cuts. With the assistance of every man, and little boy, in town, the two engines, and all the shovels and spades that the village affords, they have not yet succeeded in working a passage through the last cut in sight, and even now (7 o'clock p.m.) can be heard the shrill shrieks and gratings of the baffled engines."

<b>NORTONVILLE PRICE LIST!</b>	
<b>I Mean Business,</b>	
And to prove that fact will sell	
4 lbs Extra Choice Coffee for.....	\$1 00
84 lbs Standard A Sugar.....	1 00
84 lbs extra C Sugar.....	1 00
10 lbs New Orleans Sugar.....	1 00
<b>TEAS:</b>	
Young Hyson.....	90c
Best Imperial.....	\$1 25
Japan.....	90c
Gunpowder.....	\$1 00
<b>DRIED FRUITS:</b>	
English Currants, per lb....	10c
Apples, per lb.....	12½c
Peaches, ".....	12½c
Blackberries.....	15c
<b>Canned Fruits:</b>	
3 2 lb cans Tomatoes.....	50c
1 " can Peaches.....	25c
3 " cans Gooseberries.....	50c
Silver Gloss Starch, 2 lbs.....	25c
Kirk's Soap, 13 bars.....	\$1 00
Concentrated Lye, 3 cans.....	50c
Essence Coffee, 6 boxes.....	25c
Also a good assortment of Drugs and Medicines, Paints and Oils.	
<b>R. D. WEBB,</b>	
vln17tf Nortonville, Kansas.	

From the *Valley Falls New Era*, Oct. 9, 1875





*Nortonville in the 1880s: Railroad Street is in the background, with **E.K. Burdick**'s store on the corner. The original Santa Fe Depot [far right], built in September 1873, was a small one-room structure. During the cyclone in 1885, it was lifted from its foundation, spun around and deposited on the railroad tracks. The building was righted, however and remained in service another 10 years. Photo courtesy of Jefferson County Historical Society.*

At first, most of the population settled in the farming country surrounding the village, but the town continued to grow. Methodist and Presbyterian congregations met together for Sabbath School in the Santa Fe depot. Land sales boomed. In April 1876, the *Oskaloosa Independent* noted, "**Mr. [J.B.] Brown**, late J.P., swingeth a shingle, which sayeth in letters bold,— 'Land Agency'." In July 1876, the *Valley Falls New Era* reported, "Nortonville, a thriving town in northwest corner of township, was laid out in 1872, has got school house, stores and shops, and about 100 inhabitants."

**NORTONVILLE**

**LAND AGENCY**

—O—

**J. B. BROWN,**

NORTONVILLE, KANSAS,

**Real Estate & Loan Agent**

(S) Lands Sold on Commission. Taxes of Non-residents Paid. Abstracts of Title Furnished. Titles Perfected. Loans Negotiated on First Mortgage Security, on Five Years Time at ten per cent Interest.

**FIRST MORTGAGES BOUGHT OR SOLD.**

Call on, or Address

**J. B. BROWN,**

NORTONVILLE, KAS.

x191f.

*From the Valley Falls New Era, Mar. 18, 1876*

In March 1877, "Jake" reported to the *New Era*, "By act of Congress, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1877, a mail route between Nortonville and Winchester is established. Hope we may be able to communicate with Winchester and Oskaloosa daily, and not as it has been frequently, from one to two weeks." He also recorded that 143 people had attended Nortonville's Sabbath School that week. Public school had begun, with **Miss Flora Blair** teaching 50 students. In April 1878, **J.T. Fulton** of the *New Era* wrote, "Nortonville, in the northwest corner of the township, is a flourishing town of about 200 inhabitants."

In the early years, croquet was the town's most reported sport, but in May 1879, Nortonville correspondent "Zip" wrote to the *Winchester Argus*, "Base ball is all the rage now in these parts. Even the old men take an active part." The *Argus* reported, "As per agreement the Winchester Base Ball Club, played the Nortonville Club, on last Thursday, May 22d, which resulted in a score, 15 to 24, in favor of the Winchester Club. The boys say they were treated very kindly, and all but paying for their own dinner and cigars." Nortonville got its revenge in July, when the *Valley Falls New Era* reported, "The matched game of base ball that was played on the Valley Falls grounds yesterday between the Nortonville and Winchester clubs resulted in a glorious victory for the Nortonville boys. There were only four innings played and the Winchester boys through [*sic*] up the sponge."

In 1880, Norton Township was formed from northwestern Jefferson Township and northeastern Delaware Township. **Simeon Hull** was appointed trustee. The new township encompassed 39 miles with excellent farmland and one town, Nortonville, which received a charter as a city of the third class in June 1884.

**N.C. Hart** and **Robert Eckles** opened a flour mill in Nortonville in 1880. Eckles' share of the business was later taken over by **E.L. Worswick**. In October 1882, the *Oskaloosa Independent* reported, "this mill is rapidly growing in popular favor, and its flour finding a ready market in the surrounding towns. The mill cost, all told, about \$7,000, has two wheat burrs and one for corn, and is running day and night to fill orders."

Nortonville boasted three hotels. **Mary Dorr** owned the Dorr House, **J.B. Brown** the Commercial House, and **Al Birdsell** the Nortonville House. Methodist, Presbyterian, United Presbyterian, Christian and Seventh Day Baptist churches were built. After a fire in February 1883, a new two-story school building followed. The first high school class graduated in 1887. Brick sidewalks improved access to businesses. Temperance lecturers and the Nortonville Ladies' Society worked to keep the town free of saloons. **Mrs. S.E. Scott**, **Mrs. Love**, **Mrs. and Miss Spencer**, **Mrs. E. and Miss Eva King**, and **Mrs. Brown** offered millinery and dressmaking services. **Mary J. Willis** opened a normal school to train elementary teachers.

On June 16, 1882, a tornado struck northern Jefferson County. **T.W. Gardiner** of the *Valley Falls Register* reported, "By far the most disastrous and extensive tornado ever witnessed in this section, swept down upon us last Friday night about twelve o'clock. . . **Griffith's** [Ed.: **S.P. Griffin's**] drug front was blown in. The smokestack of the grist mill is down, and several buildings were moved from foundation and badly wrenched."

Nortonville's lumber businesses were known for high quality and competitive prices. In August 1883, "Uncle Dick" wrote to the *Winchester Argus*, "At all hours of the day and night teams may be seen coming in and going out of town engaged in handling lumber from our large and flourishing yards. They come from all over Jefferson county, from Oskaloosa, Jackson, Shawnee and Wabaunsee counties." The *Kaw Valley Chief* advertised for a rival town in 1883, "Good lumber is being sold at Medina right down at Nortonville prices."

*From the Winchester Argus, June 24, 1882*

### Nortonville Notions

NORTONVILLE, KANS., June 17, '82

On Thursday evening, June 15<sup>th</sup>, we had a memorable wedding at this place; that of **Mr. Obi Henson** and **Miss Anna Ross**, in the M.E. church. Many were invited and the house was well filled. After the marriage services, which were briefly but ably conducted by **Rev. A.S. Embree**, the immediate friends repaired to the home of the bride where supper was served in appropriate style. In due time we listened long and eagerly to silvery notes of the Nortonville silver band. The infare was duly celebrated at the husband's home last evening, and many a silver note rang out upon the midnight air.

A rain storm of unusual severity passed over this place last night. The rain fell very rapidly, nor was it of brief continuance. The wind, which was considerably stronger than usual, blew incessantly, and yet came in occasional gusts which swept off several chimneys, over turned many of the smaller out buildings and racked many larger ones; moved some of the less substantial houses from their foundations and totally demolished the house of **Mr. Langworthy**. This house stood upon an eminence about three-fourths of a mile southeast of town and had not yet been finished.

U WILL.



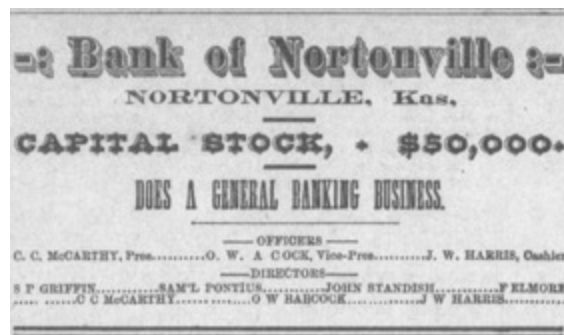
*The office of **L.F. Randolph**, who purchased the Nortonville News in the 1890s. Photo courtesy of Jefferson County Historical Society.*

In May 1885, **R.E. Van Meter** began publishing the *Nortonville News*. A year's subscription cost one dollar. Van Meter also published the *Valley Falls New Era*. **C.E. Van Meter**, the publisher's brother, managed the local business. Advertisers on the front page of the May 8 issue were **C.C. McCarthy & W.L. Layson**, dry goods and groceries, in their new double brick store; **A.J. Perry**, dry goods and groceries; and **Pontius & Wilson**, dealers in coal. Local news and advertising occupied most of page 4. **Cummings Hardware Co.** and **Griffin & Son's** drugs and medicine ran large ads. Three milliners competed for custom: **Mrs. E. King** and her daughter, **Eva King**; **M'd's Scott** and **Lane**; and **Mrs. J.C. Churchill**. **Lambert Clark's** livery stable sold fine stallions. The new firm of **F.E. Mallory & Charley Tate** offered groceries. **J.B. Brown's** Commercial House hotel, **W.T. McClure's** insurance agency, and **Dr. H.R. Maxson**, homeopathic physician and surgeon, rounded out the local advertising. Coverage of the city council meeting, probate court proceedings, and the Seventh Day Baptist temperance meeting dominated the news, along with the town's need for a telephone line and more hitching posts.

On May 29, 1885, the *News* reported, "Nortonville Visited by a Regular Kansas Twister Last Wednesday." This storm lifted the Santa Fe depot building from its foundations and moved it across the main track. On June 5, the *News* gave a long list of "resolutions" made by storm survivors. Many religious conversions seem to have occurred. The *News* also reported, "The depot is again squared around in its place and the platform will soon be in good shape again."



In 1885, merchants **C.C. McCarthy** and **W.L. Layson** began putting up a two-story bank building boasting a fire-proof vault and a burglar-proof safe. Several Missouri bankers visited but opted not to locate in Nortonville. McCarthy became the new bank's organizer, hiring **J.W. Harris** of Columbia, Missouri, as cashier. On Dec. 4, 1885, the *Nortonville News* reported, "Through the persistent efforts of our businessmen an association of our most promising citizens forming a banking company has at last been effected. The capital stock of the institution is \$50,000, the number of share-holders being twenty-five." Bank officers were president, **C.C. McCarthy**; vice president, **O.W. Babcock**; cashier, **J.W. Harris**; directors, **Samuel Pontius**, **O.W. Babcock**, **John Standish**, **S.P. Griffin**, **F. Elmore**, **J.W. Harris**, **C.C. McCarthy**.



From the Nortonville News, May 21, 1886

The Bank of Nortonville opened in January 1886. It became the First National Bank in 1900. In 1887, **A.J. Perry** organized the Nortonville Savings Bank. It became the Nortonville State Bank, and then the Exchange State Bank. It closed in 1930.

In 1892, St. Joseph's Catholic church, a daughter parish of Corpus Christi in Mooney Creek, was added to the town's roster. St. Matthew's Lutheran church followed in 1897, meeting in the Washington school house near Nortonville.



From the Nortonville News, Jan. 3, 1886

In 1895, electric light frenzy struck the town. After an October visit from **J.A. Bendure** of Atchison's power company, the *Nortonville News* reported, "It begins to look now as though the lighting of the city of Nortonville with electricity would be a reality." A steam heating plant was also planned, and a joint stock company was organized. In December, the *News* suggested a "big electric celebration" in anticipation of the new lighting. It also added a warning:

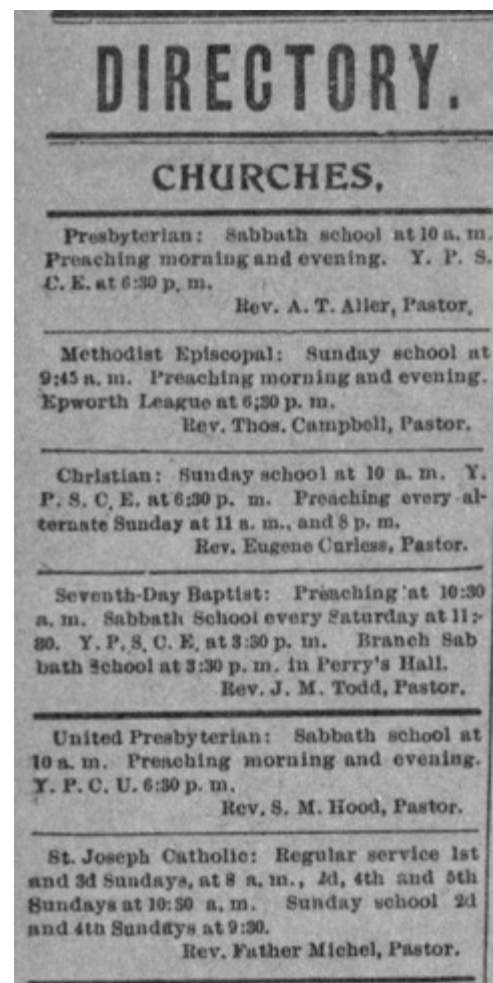
"'Ardent admirers' should be a little more prudent in the display of

their affections on the streets at night; the glare of the electric lights hereafter will be another interference." By January 1886, the lights were on and steam radiators were being installed in many businesses.

In August 1888, the *Nortonville News* wrote, "Do you want the telephone line in Nortonville? Of course you do; then wake up and do something." One hopeful sign was the presence of "telephone men" at the Commercial Hotel. The city rejected the Missouri and Kansas telephone company's right-of-way proposal, but several merchants were already connecting their businesses and homes. Telephone poles arrived by rail. Progress was slow. By 1901, three lines had been built into Nortonville, but the town still lacked a local telephone exchange.

Local citizens organized the Nortonville Telephone Company in 1901. In October, **J.W. Buis** applied to the city for a telephone franchise. In December, Buis began installing phones in businesses and residences. The First National Bank had telephone no. 1, and the *Nortonville News* had no. 2. Thirty-five farms between Nortonville and Atchison were connected. The *News* expressed its satisfaction with the exchange: "It makes us feel exceedingly neighborly to say 'good morning' to Atchison, Effingham, Hiawatha, Falls City, or any of the towns in southeastern Nebraska." In March 1902, the *News* published a telephone directory, with numbers 1 through 275. It filled less than half of page 9.

The *Nortonville News* boasted in 1895, "Nortonville is all right and up to date with her telephone, electric lights and steam heating plant, her enterprising business men, elegant homes and christian citizens. Who wouldn't be a Nortonvillain?"



From the Nortonville News, Sept. 4, 1896

TIME CARD.			
ATCHISON, TOPEKA & SANTA FE R R			
GOING EAST.			
Atlantic Express	—	—	4:48 p. m.
New York "	—	—	4:56 a. m.
Local Freight	—	—	11:03 a. m.
GOING WEST.			
California & Mexico Express	—	—	11:03 a. m.
Colorado Express	—	—	11:07 p. m.
Local Freight	—	—	9:05 a. m.
All passenger trains make close connection with through trains both east and west. For further information call on or address			
H. L. QUAIL, Agent.			
NORTONVILLE KAN.			

From the Nortonville News, May 14, 1886

## After the Railroad

In March 1958, Santa Fe closed its passenger service to Nortonville with a special excursion train from Topeka to Atchison. Passengers boarded the train at each station along the route, commemorating the end of an era. Freight service continued until June 1990. The track and the gravel bed were sold in 1991, and the right-of-way lands were returned to the original owners.

One hundred years after its founding, Nortonville citizens came together to celebrate. A centennial ball, two parades, a rocking chair marathon and a history pageant highlighted the four-day event. Nortonville's centennial and 125-year anniversary books are online as PDFs on the Nortonville city website: <https://nortonvilleks.com/About-Us/History>. The genealogy library at Old Jefferson Town houses 37 years of clippings that **Reba Kenyon Wheeler** compiled about Nortonville from 1969 to 2007.

—Jane Hoskinson

## Sources

City of Nortonville, Kansas,

<https://nortonvilleks.com/About-Us/History>

Cutler, William G., *History of the State of Kansas*, pub. A.T. Andreas, Chicago, 1883

*Grass Hopper and New Era*, Sept. 26, 1874

*Kaw Valley Chief*, Perry, Kan., Aug. 17, 1883

*Nortonville Herald*, Mar. 13, 1896; May 8, 1896; July 31, 1896

*Nortonville News*, May 8, 1885; May 15, 1885; May 22, 1885;

May 29, 1885; Aug. 7, 1885; Aug. 14, 1885; Oct. 9, 1885;

Oct. 16, 1885; Dec. 4, 1885; Dec. 11, 1885; Dec. 18, 1885;

Jan. 3, 1886; Jan. 8, 1886; May 14, 1886; May 21, 1886;

Aug. 24, 1888; Aug. 31, 1888; Oct. 12, 1888; Nov. 4, 1892;

Dec. 9, 1892; Oct. 11, 1895; Oct. 18, 1895; Dec. 6, 1895;

Dec. 13, 1895; Dec. 20, 1895; Sept. 4, 1896; Feb. 9, 1900;

Dec. 21, 1900; May 24, 1901; May 31, 1901; Nov. 29, 1901;

Dec. 6, 1901; Dec. 13, 1901; Dec. 27, 1901; Jan 10, 1902;

Mar. 28, 1902

*Oskaloosa Independent*, May 9, 1874; Apr. 8, 1876; Sept. 4, 1880;

Jan. 10, 1880; Mar. 15, 1890; Nov. 5, 1881; Oct. 7, 1882

*Oskaloosa Sickle*, Dec. 25, 1880; Feb. 24, 1883; Mar. 3, 1883

*Valley Falls New Era*, Sept. 11, 1875; Oct. 9, 1875; Mar. 18, 1876;

July 1, 1876; Feb. 10, 1877; Mar. 24, 1877; Apr. 20, 1878;

July 5, 1879; May 29, 1880; June 18, 1881

*Valley Falls Register*, June 23, 1882; Apr. 13, 1883

*Valley Falls Vindicator*, July 12, 1973; July 26, 1973

Weishaar, Bess and LeRoy, *Nortonville, Kansas: A Century of Friends Old and New*, July 1973

Weishaar, Kathleen, *Nortonville, Kansas: 125 Years of Friends Old and New*, 1998

*Winchester Argus*, May 15, 1879; May 29, 1879; June 24, 1882; Aug. 18, 1883

**NORTONVILLE.**

This thriving little "burg" is situated on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railroad, nine miles from Valley Falls and seventeen from Atchison. It is just inside the Jefferson county line, and has a very beautiful site, on a ridge of high, rolling prairie. The country surrounding the town is, for agricultural purposes, equal to any in the State, and makes the place the natural market for a large amount of grain, pork, stock, etc.

The principal business firms are as follows:

McCarthy & Layson, general merchandise and lumber.  
A. J. Perry, groceries, dry goods, clothing, boots and shoes, etc.  
Muncey & Whitmer, drugs and groceries.  
Campbell & Cummings, hardware, furniture and implements.  
Griffin & Son, drugs and groceries.  
John Campbell, lumber.  
Frank Truesdale, harness and saddlery.

The town also contains the usual complement of hotels, restaurants, etc., and all have a good trade.

From the Valley Falls New Era, June 18, 1881



## Nortonville Telephone Co.,

Offices in First National Bank building, first class in every respect. We guarantee our service and instruments. Toll line connections with all towns and cities in north-eastern Kansas and northwestern Missouri. Full metallic circuits throughout. Our rates for business houses and offices are \$1.50 per month or 5 cents per day, residence \$1.00 per month for farm lines our rates with Atchison connections are 7 cents per day, without Atchison connections 5 cents per day. If in need of telephone service call us up or leave address and we will call upon you and explain our rates and service.

Following is a partial list of our subscribers.

J. W. BUIS, Manager.

## Directory of Nortonville Telephone Exchange

To call Central give two quick turns of crank. If party does not answer when called do not blame the operator; 'tis fault of party not answering phone. Subscribers have no authority to loan the use of their phones. Non-subscribers will be charged a toll to talk to parties on farm or toll lines. Always ring off when through talking by quick turn of crank. Any fault with telephone or service should be reported promptly to Central.

### A

No.  
267 Adams, W. .... Farmer  
272 Adams, J. .... Milk Dairy

### B

1 Babcock, O. W. .... Pres. 1st Nat'l Bank  
5 Babcock, O. W. .... Residence  
7 Babcock, M. S. .... Residence  
1 Bank, First National  
17 Brunstetter, P. .... Groceries  
264 Barber, M. H. .... Farmer  
269 Barber, D. P. .... Farmer  
278 Beckley, H. M. .... Gardner  
32 Burdick, H. D. .... Jewelry and Music  
100 Buis, J. W. .... Manager  
2 Burdick, A. P. .... Printing office

### C

24 Cook, Miss Kate. .... Residence  
39 Coon, D. C. .... Residence  
37 Campbell, John. .... Residence  
271 Cox, N. J. .... Cummings  
262 Compton, Mrs. L. .... Gardener

### E

1 Elmore, J. L. .... Asst Cr 1st Nat'l bank  
4 Elmore, J. L. .... Residence  
27 Eyerly, E. H. .... Office

### G

25 Griffin & Son. .... Merchants  
39 Griffin, U. S. .... Residence  
21 Groff, Dr. W. D. .... Office  
19 Groff, Dr. W. D. .... Residence  
45 Glaspey, E. M. .... Cold Storage

### H

1 Harris, J. W. .... Cash'r 1st Nat'l bank  
3 Harris, J. W. .... Residence  
15 Hummel, D. E. .... Furniture and Imp't  
42 Hummel, D. E. .... Residence  
263 Hetham, J. C. .... Farmer

### K

28 Kaufman Bros. .... Merchants  
41 Kaufman, Chas. .... Residence  
29 Koenig, W. C. .... Bakery  
270 Kenyon, Frank .... Mule Buyer  
274 Kenyon, Grant .... Farmer  
268 Keats, Thomas .... Farmer  
55 Knapp, Clarence .... Residence

### L

27 Lehman, E. T. .... Office  
18 Lehman, E. T. .... Residence  
47 Langrall, Dr. C. .... Office

### M

9 Maxson, Dr. H. R. .... Residence  
12 McCarthy, C. C. .... Merchant  
8 McCarthy, C. C. .... Residence  
30 Meier & Weishaar Merchants  
40 Mair, John. .... Hardware and Imp't  
13 Moxley, Walter. .... Residence  
265 Martie, W. M. .... Thresher  
43 Maxson, A. H. .... Residence  
38 McCay, S. A. .... Meat Market

### N

2 News Printing Office  
265 Nistler, C. H. .... Gardener

### O

14 Oursler, W. E. M. .... Residence

### P

36 Pardee, C. A. .... Restaurant

### R

6 Randolph, G. F. .... Residence  
28 Randolph, L. F. .... Residence  
11 Roberts, D. E. .... Residence

### S

20 Satterlee & Son .... Merchants  
275 Spaulding farm  
31 Seever, J. H. .... Residence and stables  
16 Sharp, Ed. .... Residence  
36 Speck, J. J. .... Residence

### T

10 Timby, G. W. .... Windmills and pumps  
34 Timby, G. W. .... Residence

### V

44 Varner, W. M. .... Residence

### W

21 Webb & Groff .... Druggists  
22 Whitaker, F. F. .... Hardware

Left: Directory of the Nortonville Telephone Exchange, 1902. From the Nortonville News, Mar. 28, 1902

## Long Lost Son

From the Oskaloosa Independent,  
July 22, 1910

Twelve years of worry and heartache and longing ended when **Mr. and Mrs. John Weishaar** of Nortonville embraced their long lost son, **Obie**, at Garfield, Utah, last week. Sitting on the porch at the little home in Utah the mother wrote to each of her children, telling of the meeting with the wanderer, and one of the letters came to **Foy Weishaar** at Oskaloosa. It is a motherly letter and through every page there ripples a joyous note of a dream come true. "It's almost too good to be true," wrote the mother.

When Obie Weishaar left the farm up in the Dutch settlement north of Winchester, he was at the point in life where boyhood was gone and manhood not come. That was 18 years ago; 12 years ago the last letter came from him in a little town in Colorado. Nine years ago, while employed in the Garfield copper mine, there was an accident and at a hospital Obie's arm was amputated. When recovered he returned to the works and has since been employed as a superintendent of one of the departments.

Eight years ago he was married and has a family of three children. The good old Methodist mother was overjoyed to find he had not married a Mormon lady. Sitting on the porch, father and mother watched the coming of the son down the street. When he recognized them he stopped as though all power of action had left him, and then plunged down the dusty road and through the gate. "My God! Is it mother? Can it be possible?" And then they all cried.

## Spurlock / Fairmont / Fairmount / District No. 41 School, Kentucky Township, Jefferson County, Kansas

(Update, including information not contained in  
*Days of Our Youth* by **Gordon Rumbaugh**)

By **Ardie Grimes**, Secretary and Librarian,  
Jefferson County Historical Society

Spurlock School, northeast of Perry, was originally located at the SE corner of the SE ¼ of Section 2, Township 11, Range 18, according to Gordon Rumbaugh's book *Days of Our Youth* and a Quit Claim Deed filed 22 Apr. 1870 in Book O, Page 518. It was a stone building, which was declared unsafe sometime before June 1897, when a bond election was held, and \$400 in bonds were approved for a new school building. The only mention of the bond election was found in the Commissioner's minutes, Journal J, October 6, 1897, which instructs the County Clerk "to not enter on the tax rolls of 1897 the levy of 9 mills for bond and interest fund in School District No. 41, said bonds being in controversy." However, a newspaper article reprinted from the *State Journal* by the *Oskaloosa Independent* in early September 1897 indicates that four men of Jefferson County visited the State House and secured the funds.

Around the first of July 1897 another special election was held to locate the new school house about a half mile south, on the farm of **Alex Eaton**. Apparently, the bond election was hotly contested with some opposing the expense of a new school building, while others opposed the new location. By mid-September the legality of the voting was cleared up, which had hinged on one vote. By late September, lumber was being hauled and placed to build the new school, without mention of location.

A deed, dated 03 Aug. 1897 between **Alexander Eaton** and his wife **Angeline Eaton** and School District Number Forty-One (41) transferred 1 acre, 209 feet square off the NE corner of the SE quarter of Section Eleven (11) in township number Eleven (11) of Jefferson County. A clause was included in the deed stating that when the school district ceased to use the 1-acre plot it "shall revert and be the property of the owner of the said SE ¼ of Section No. 11, Township 11, Range 18 of Jefferson County." This location is clearly shown on both the 1899 Descriptive Atlas of Jefferson County, and in the 1916 Plat Map Atlas.

The old Spurlock school stone building was sold at public auction on 06 Nov. 1897. The purchasers were **James Adams** and **Otto Scherck**, who paid \$25.

In April 1902, the patrons of Fairmount school set out about 50 trees. Oyster suppers, pie socials and ice cream socials were popular events at the school, to raise funds for a library, and other items to benefit the school.

Then in November 1912, the Spurlock school house was appraised to be sold to make room for the new school building to be erected. Bonds of \$1000 were voted for the new building.

Box suppers were popular events to raise money for bookcases and books. In 1915, the teacher's salary was \$55.00. It does not say how long the school term was. In April 1920, the board advertised for bids to dig a new well at the Fairmount school house. **George Seetin** was the treasurer, and **Jess Lowe** was also involved in the bidding process.

In April 1922, the patrons of the school voted to hold an eight-month term of school for the 1922-23 school year and were congratulated by the editor of the *Perry Mirror* for their foresight. **Mr. E.E. Dooley** was elected as director of the school board. Enrollment in October 1923 was 26 students.

The Fairmount school building was sold at public auction on 22 February 1947. Wondering why, I was able to find affidavits made by George Seetin, former treasurer of District No. 41, and by **Kirby Rogers**, former director of District 41, which stated that on 01 March 1947 School District No. 41 was reorganized intact into School District No. 34 (Perry), pursuant to an order of the Jefferson County School Reorganization Committee.

All the newspaper articles (and more) mentioned here are on file at the Jefferson County Historical Society library, along with the legal documents mentioned.

A shout out to **Jay Cress** of Edmond, OK, whose research request started this whole process. His grandmother taught at the school in the 1920s.



Fairmount - Dist. 41

Photo courtesy of Jefferson County Historical Society.



## Smoky Hill Route

*From the Oskaloosa Independent, Oct. 10, 1860*

One day last week a part of the company composing the Smoky Hill Expedition, consisting of nine wagons, five or six extra horses and twelve or fifteen men, passed through this place, on their return from Denver City to Leavenworth.

They report very favorably of the route up the Kansas River and Smoky Hill Fork, as being the shortest and best road to the gold regions on the Eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains. They say the distance by the Smoky Hill route, by measurement, is over one hundred miles shorter from Leavenworth to Denver, than the distance between the same points on the Platte River road; that the ground over which the first named road passes is much more level and smoother than the latter; that where trains have to drag through miles of sand beds on the Platte road, on this they have no sand except at the crossings of streams, and such places are not more than a rod in length; that a good span of horses can draw 2000 lbs over any part of the Smoky Hill road; that even in this dry season, there is plenty of water the whole distance; that there is a sufficiency of wood, with a little exception, and in the few places where wood is scarce, there are buffalo chips in abundance; and that grass is much more abundant and luxuriant than by the northern route. This party report that buffalo are now near the white settlements about Salina, in great numbers, and that they are generally very fat.

This road will cross Stranger creek at the bridge at Russell's Mill, and pass through Oskaloosa and Osawkee, thence following pretty nearly the old Military road to Fort Riley.

The citizens of this locality, and those at Osawkee and along the route between here and there, should turn out now and do some more work on the road between here and the latter named place; and east of Oskaloosa, within two miles of town, there are two crooks in the road which need to be straightened and worked some. When this is done, we may soon expect to see a daily Express line established on this route, which will bring renewed life and vigor to our already lively village. Let this matter be attended to immediately.

## Soap Bubble Party

*From the Oskaloosa Independent, Aug. 25, 1883*

*Contributed by Leanne Chapman*

**Ethel and Leslie Lane** had a dozen or more little girls in to a "soap bubble party" last Friday afternoon. Great enthusiasm was shown, and blowing bubbles was counted ever so much fun.

## Plan to Improve Highway

*From the Winchester Star, July 8, 1938*

*Contributed by Leanne Chapman*

A party of citizens from Winchester and community appeared before county board at Oskaloosa Wednesday in the interest of getting the road from the Leavenworth county line to highway 59 made a black top thoroughfare. After presenting the matter to the board, that body ordered the county engineer to get busy on matters preliminary to the work. We learn that after the commissioners heard the facts in the case they were unanimous in their decision in the matter and even adopted the necessary resolutions calling for the improvement. So it now looks as if Winchester is going to get a much deserved black top highway, after many long years of patient waiting.

## Too Late for Probate

*From the Winchester Star, Apr. 20, 1945*

*Contributed by Leanne Chapman*

The Probate Judge tells us of a group of heirs coming into his office and requesting payment of the sum of \$81.00 left to them under an estate probated in 1899. Many years ago the money was paid to a sister. The heirs now desire to proceed against their sister but she is dead. The Judge told them they should not have waited 46 years before coming in to see about the estate.

## Cedar Creek Chivari

*From the Oskaloosa Independent, Mar. 11, 1876*

The boys up on Cedar Creek concluded to have a "chivari" one day last week, at the house of Uncle **Geo. Vangaasbeck**, his son **Otto** having married the day before. The boys commenced firing guns around the house, and making a terrible noise generally by the swinging of "horse fiddles," rattling of tin pans, &c. Uncle George came out with a gun in his hand, and told the boys he "would give them five and not one minute longer to get off of his premises," at the same time pointing the gun directly at the crowd.—From the known character of Uncle George, the boys believed that he meant what he said, and there was a general stampede, one of them knocking all the skin off one side of his face against an apple tree, in his hasty flight. The joke of it is, Uncle George says the gun has not been loaded for a year.

*[Ed.: Anybody know what a "horse fiddle" is?]*

## Trio 'Got Some Love' 95 Years Ago

**Rick Nichols**

Seemingly not of that type that eagerly seeks publicity, three Jefferson County Civil War veterans who had the same first name, James, somehow came to the attention of an out-of-county daily newspaper in 1928. The result was the following story that ran in the May 11, 1928, issue of *The Leavenworth Times*, a well-written piece that precedes the obituaries for each of these old soldiers.

### Three Jims Fight Battles Over Again At Oskaloosa

**James W. Shrader, James H. Morrow And James Mains Live At Oskaloosa — Fought Through Civil War And Then Came to Kansas.**

Old friends and companions for many years, friends so close that their names have merged in the minds of the townspeople, and they are now known only as "The Three Jims," are three old soldiers of Oskaloosa, **James W. Shrader, James H. Morrow and James Mains.**

"The Three Jims," then young boys of 16 and 17 years of age, fought in widely separate sections of the country during the Civil War. The three drifted out to Kansas after the war, and settled down on farms almost adjoining each other. They farmed for many years, raised families, and then all three retired and moved into town, and have been looking on life peacefully ever since.

All of them have exciting stories to tell, of big battles, sieges, skirmishes and hairbreadth escapes from the Indians.

**Jim Mains** can probably add personal recollection to about all the history in the history-books about the Civil War. He served all thru the war in the thickest of the fighting. He fought under both **General Grant** and **General Sherman**. He fought under Sherman on his famous Atlantic campaign about which "Marching Through Georgia" was written; he went on his march to the sea, helped take Savannah, and was there when Sherman gave it to **President Lincoln** for a Christmas present.

Mains was born in Scotland, near Campbelltown. He crossed the ocean in a sailing vessel when he was seven years old, the voyage taking eight weeks. Three days and nights of that time he was shut up in the hold during a storm. He came across the country to Illinois, where he lived several years. In 1862 he enlisted from there in the 111th Illinois regiment, Company K.

He went down to Vicksburg where he fought under General Grant in the Vicksburg campaign. Grant had his headquarters close to where Mains was camped. After Vicksburg was taken, Mains' corps, the 20th, was sent to Kentucky, and to Bridgeport, Alabama. Mains was in the decisive battle of Missionary Ridge at Chattanooga. Grant was put in command of all the Union armies after that battle, and Sherman took his place as commander of the army of the Mississippi. They spent that winter in Lookout Valley, preparing for the Atlantic campaign.

"Sherman organized the three armies that winter," said Mains, "and we started on the Atlantic campaign. I was in the battles of Marietta, Ringold, Decatur and Atlanta. Then we prepared for the march to the sea. We got to Savannah a little before Christmas. They held us back quite a while but Sherman was able to make President Lincoln a Christmas present of it."

They went up thru the Carolinas and into West Virginia to start on the Raleigh campaign.

"Just before we got to Raleigh, we received word of **Lee's** surrender," said Mains. "We were camped in a long field, strung out for about a quarter of a mile. We saw an orderly riding down the field toward us, riding just as hard as he could go, shouting something, and waving his arms. We could see the men throwing their hats up as the orderly passed, and we knew something had happened. And then we got the news. Well, we threw our hats up, too."

Mains was in Raleigh at the time of Lincoln's assassination. **Johnson** surrendered to General Sherman in a few weeks, and the war was over. The Union troops were ordered to Washington for the grand review. Mains' corps was camped on Arlington Heights. Sherman's army was on parade all the second day of the grand review. Then they were mustered out.

Mains went back to Virginia, Ill., just in time to go into the harvest field. He married in 1871, came out to Kansas, bought a farm near Oskaloosa, and farmed for 45 years. In 1916 he retired and moved into Oskaloosa, where he has lived ever since. He was at one time president of the State Livestock association.

**Jim Morrow** fought, as a boy of 16, in the 116th Indiana infantry, Company D. He was born in Ireland, came to America when a boy, and worked on a farm near Lafayette, Ind. He enlisted in 1863, and fought in North Carolina, Tennessee and Georgia. He was in the battle of Cumberland Gap, Strawberry Plains, and at Knoxville, Tenn., under **General Burnside** as commander.



He came to Kansas at the close of the war and freighted across the plains from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Dodge. He had skirmishes with the Indians, who would shoot a few arrows in the general direction of the freighters, and then scoot away.

He came back to Oskaloosa, moved on a farm, married, and settled down. In 1892 he moved off the farm into Oskaloosa.

**Jim Shrader** enlisted in Company D of the 11th Kansas cavalry, and fought in Arkansas and out in Wyoming against the Indians.

Shrader was one of five men to escape in a fight of 25 against about 3,000 Indians near Casper, Wyo.

“Twenty-five of us started out to bring food and supplies to 110 men who were cooped up in a stockade,” he said. “They were having a lot of trouble with the Indians. Over 3,000 of them had collected—the remnants of five tribes, Sioux, Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Blackfeet and Comanches. Forty men took the supplies up to the stockade, and 25 of us followed them. We got there all right, and then left two sick men at the stockade, and started back.

“The Indians surrounded us on the way back. They saw us as we reached the top of the hill. We dug trenches right there, and ran bullets just as fast as we could.

“We fought there at the top of the hill for two days. Twenty of our men died there. Three of us then managed to get away. Some men from the fort buried the dead, 20 of them in one grave. I went out there a few years ago to see if I couldn’t find the grave. But the wind blew, the sun had baked it, there had been a pasture there, and the hollow had filled up. I couldn’t locate it.”

Shrader came back to Kansas at the close of the war and started farming. He farmed for 40 years, and then moved into town about 20 years ago.

“The Three Jims” have been together a good while, keeping up their contacts with other Civil War veterans. The three belong to the same army post, of which there are only seven members left of a former 105.

Now they meet every day in the front yard of the home of one of the Jims, smoking their pipes, reminiscing, discussing politics, the farm situation, and other subjects of current interest. But oftenest of all they fight over the old battles, marking off the positions with their canes upon the ground.

## **James Mains**

*From the Oskaloosa Independent, Dec. 20, 1934*

The death of “**Uncle Jim**” **Mains**, last Sunday night, December 16 on the eve of his 92nd birthday, following that of his daughter **Miss Addie** by less than three weeks. His death removes from this community the last resident survivor save one of the Grand Army of the Republic. He had been in frail health for about ten years, requiring the close attention and care of his daughter.

James Mains was born to **Thomas** and **Margaret Mains** at Campbelltown, Scotland, December 18, 1842. At the age of seven he came with his widowed mother to Illinois, making the trip nearly all that great distance by water, first to New York in a sailing vessel, an eight weeks trip, thence up to the Hudson, the Erie canal, Great Lakes and Illinois river, to within twelve miles of their destination at Beardstown. James arrived at manhood’s estate just in time to join the Union army (in 1862); he was enrolled in Company K, 101st Illinois Volunteer Infantry, served under **General Grant** in the Vicksburg campaign, fought at Lookout Mountain, Missionary Ridge, Knoxville, Chattanooga; marched with **Sherman** to the sea; moved with Sherman’s army north to Raleigh. “Just before we got to Raleigh,” “Uncle Jim” once related, “we received word of **Lee**’s surrender, we were camped in a field, strung out for about a quarter of a mile. We saw an orderly riding down the field toward us, coming as hard as he could ride, shouting and waving his arms. We could see the men throwing their hats up as the orderly passed them. Then he passed us and we threw our hats up, too.” At Raleigh, **Joe Johnson** surrendered to Sherman. Mains’ corps was camped at Arlington Heights for the grand review and then was mustered out.

Mains went back to Illinois and to the farm. In 1871 he was married to **Ellen Dick** at Beardstown; they came to Kansas on their honeymoon, bought a farm three miles southeast of Oskaloosa and there they resided nearly forty years and reared their family of two sons and two daughters.

Of this family only one survives today, the son **Irl Mains**, of Kansas City, Mo. The son **Dr. Roy Mains** and the daughter **Mrs. Margaret Simmons**, died several years ago, **Miss Addie** three weeks ago.

A good Jefferson county farm was a prize in those days and Mains had a good one. He prospered. He was interested in purebred livestock, became widely known in this section of the country as a breeder of registered Poland Chinas, was one-time president of the state livestock association, and for many years one of the chief promoters of the Jefferson county fair at Oskaloosa.

The First Presbyterian church of Oskaloosa, which **Mr. and Mrs. Mains** joined April 21, 1879, knew him as a faithful loyal elder, and even in old age until his death he was an honorary elder. He was twice honored by Topeka presbytery to represent it at the General Assembly, once at St. Louis and once at Atlanta.

In 1900 Mr. Mains retired from farming and the family moved into the commodious residence on Cherokee street where, on December 18, 1921, Mr. and Mrs. Mains celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. A few weeks thereafter Mrs. Mains passed away, and the care of her father fell upon **Miss Addie**, who ceased not for twelve years in a constant ministry until three weeks ago, when in exhaustion of body and of spirit she lay down to rest, on November 27th.

Uncle Jim was prominent in G.A.R. activities and during his later years his greatest delight was to be the host at social parties with his old comrades as guests. One by one these pals slipped away ahead of him — **“Jim” Morrow**, **“Jim” Shrader** and **“Pete” Bliss** being among the last to go. Now only **“Bill” Monroe** is left of the old group who wore the bronze buttons and as members of Jules Williams Post enjoyed the comradeship of the long years in this community.

Funeral services for Mr. Mains were held Wednesday afternoon at the Presbyterian church, the impressive message being given by the pastor who had also been a near friend and comforter, **Rev. E.A. Ahrens**. Music was furnished by **Mrs. Emmett Morrow** and the Presbyterian choir. Sixteen legionnaires escorted the casket, two in uniform standing guard throughout the service at the church. **W.D. Monroe**, Civil War veteran, was present at the service. **Leland Huddleston** acted as bugler.

### **James H. Morrow**

*From the Oskaloosa Independent, Jan. 17, 1930*

Uncle Jim, as he was familiarly called by his many friends led an eventful life, holding various positions of trust in both county and township. He was a man of strong personality and did not hesitate to take a position for the right as he saw it. A constant attendant and elder of the Presbyterian church, he will be greatly missed by the older members. He leaves to mourn his passing two children, **Caddie B. Patrick**, daughter, and **J.E. Morrow**, son; two grandchildren, **Mary Catherine Morrow** and **James Lohman Morrow**; two sisters, **Mrs. Mary Huber**, of Terre Haute, Indiana, **Mrs. Rachael Fuller**, Vermillion, South Dakota, and one brother, **John Morrow**, of Crawfordsville, Indiana.

Funeral services were held Sunday afternoon at the Presbyterian church, conducted by the pastor, **Rev. E.A. Ahrens**. Interment was made at Pleasant View cemetery, where the Masonic lodge conducted services.

### **James W. Shrader**

*From the Oskaloosa Independent, Dec. 30, 1929*

**James W. Shrader**, oldest son of **Oliver** and **Rachel Shrader** was born in Dekalb county, Indiana, July 31, 1842, and departed this life Dec. 13, 1929. Coming of sturdy, pioneer parentage he, too, early showed that same dauntless spirit which characterized the lives of the men and women who moved westward into the new country which is now our middle west.

His family stayed in Indiana until Mr. Shrader was twelve years of age and then began the westward trend. Beginning with the spring of 1853 they moved to Ill., the next year to Wis. and then to Iowa in 1856. In the spring of 1857 they started for Kansas, reaching Oskaloosa in June. He resided with his parents until the opening of the War of the Rebellion when he began driving teams in government wagon trains, and later enlisted in Co. D of the 11th Kan. Cavalry, serving three years. After the war was over he returned to Oskaloosa and on Jan. 20, 1867, he was married to **Miss Laurette Conwell**. To this union were born four children **William W.** of Oskaloosa, **Cora K. Snyder** of Tecumseh, Kan., **Edgar P.** who died at the age of six years and **Victoria** of Oskaloosa. He resided with his family on a farm three and one half miles southeast of Oskaloosa until the spring of 1908, at which time he moved to town.

He, with Mrs. Shrader was converted in the old Methodist church in Oskaloosa in the winter of 1873. After uniting with the church he made it one of the chief concerns of his life to which he was always faithful and loyal. He has been an official member for years and was made class leader in 1884.

As a boy and young man he helped to haul lumber for the old church and a few years ago when the new church was built he found a great joy in helping with its construction.

His presence will be much missed, not only in his own family circle but by a host of friends.

Besides his own children he leaves to mourn his going, two grandchildren, one great grandchild and one sister, **Mrs. Hattie Sausser**, of Los Angeles, Calif.

## Emancipation Celebrations: From Watch Night to Juneteenth

In June 2023 at Old Jefferson Town, an exhibit by **Sonya Boldridge, Patty Boldridge and Leanne Chapman** displayed local newspaper articles chronicling celebrations of the Emancipation Proclamation.

**Emancipation Proclamation:** The announcement made by **President Lincoln** during the Civil War on September 22, 1862, emancipating all slaves in states still engaged in rebellion against the Union. Although implementation was strictly beyond Lincoln's powers, the declaration turned the war into a declaration against slavery. It went into effect on January 1, 1863.

The African-American communities in Jefferson county for many years celebrated Emancipation on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September as you will see in some of the newspaper articles over the years.

Not only the African-American families but many white citizens participated in the celebrations as the food was very good for all to enjoy.

**Emancipation Program.**

Program to be rendered New Years night the 37th anniversary of the freeing of the colored people.

- 1 Emancipation Proclamation.
- 2 Song—America.
- 3 Invocation.
- 4 Music—Quartette.
- 5 Welcome address—Urskin Read.
- 6 Paper—Mrs. L. Smith.
- 7 Music—Mandolin Club.
- 8 Emancipation—C. B. Bryant.
- 9 Music—Quartette.
- 10 Original Poem—Prof. Martin, Valley Falls.
- 11 Recitation—Miss Josie Mason, Winchester.
- 12 Music—Mandolin Club.
- 13 Paper—The Negro in Politics—H. C. Tompkins.
- 14 Discussion—Lewis Todd, Ben English, G. W. Jones, Sr., Alf Jackson.
- 15 Music—Quartette.
- 16 Address—Rev. R. House.
- 17 Music—Mandolin Club.
- 18 Paper—Harve Tompkins.

Watch Night Program from the Oskaloosa Times, Dec. 29, 1899

The colored people of Kansas have been in the habit of celebrating August 4th as Emancipation day. The Jamaica slaves were freed on this date, and a large number of the colored people in Kansas have concluded that it is more proper to celebrate September 22nd, the date of Lincoln's proclamation. This year celebrations will occur on the September date.

From the Oskaloosa Times, Aug. 17, 1900

The United Order of Imaculates will hold a celebration at Valley Falls on Emancipation Day, Sept. 22nd. Everyone is invited to attend.

From the Oskaloosa Times, Sept. 14, 1900

Sheriff Ham and Superintendent Worswick went to Perry Tuesday to attend the emancipation celebration.

From the Oskaloosa Times, Sept. 25, 1896

A large number of the colored folks of Perry went to Williamstown Saturday to attend the emancipation celebration. One of the principal features was a barbecue superintended by Peter Jordon of Perry.

From the Oskaloosa Independent, Sept. 27, 1901



Emancipation day was observed by Afro Americans at the fair ground Tuesday. Prof. King spoke and all enjoyed a basket dinner.

*From the Oskaloosa Independent, Sept. 25, 1903*

The colored citizens will celebrate emancipation day here Saturday and have a big time. They will have a street parade, speaking at the city park, music by the band, baseball, and at night an old time "festible." Let freedom ring.

*From the Jefferson County Tribune, Sept. 1, 1906*

### Emancipation Celebration.

The colored people gathered in the park emancipation day and had a royal celebration. There was music and public speaking. A parade had been planned but was dispensed with. The ball game between Topeka and Oskaloosa re-

The Rock Creek Township Sunday School Convention will be held at Meriden September 29 and 30 at the M. E. church beginning at 2:30 Saturday afternoon and closing at sundown Sunday. Prominent Sunday School workers will take part in the long program. Everybody invited.

The proceeds from the ball game, festival etc Emancipation day were \$75, the expenses about \$60, leaving a profit balance of \$15, to be divided for the colored churches.

*From the Oskaloosa Times, Sept. 27, 1906*

### Big Celebration at Oskaloosa

A grand double celebration of the 56th anniversary of the Emancipation and a jubilee celebration for the returned soldier boys of Jefferson county; given by the negro citizens of Jefferson county will be held in the court house park on tomorrow, Saturday, the 20th. All soldiers in uniform will be served dinner free. Jackson's 23rd regiment band of Topeka will be on hand and talks will be made by Lieut. Oscar P. May, Oskaloosa; Jesse Bryant of Perry, and Prof. J. P. King of Kansas City. In the afternoon a ball game will be played by Atchison and Oskaloosa teams. Races and contests of all kinds at the ball park. A program and dance will be held in the evening. Everybody is cordially invited to come out and help the colored folks celebrate.

*From the Jefferson County Tribune, Sept. 19, 1919*

The colored folks celebrated the 51st anniversary of Emancipation Wednesday at the Jones farm, west of town. Amusements of all kinds were provided and a game of ball played between the town boys and the negro team resulted in a victory for the latter with a score of 4 to 3. In the evening a fish fry was held at the Baptist church.

*From the Jefferson County Tribune, Sept. 24, 1915*

*Editor's note: Emancipation has been celebrated in the United States on many different dates. New York emancipated its enslaved people on July 5, 1827, and the Fifth of July was solemnly observed as Black Independence Day. Free Black Americans celebrated British emancipation in the West Indies on August 1. The District of Columbia still observes April 16, when President Lincoln freed D.C.'s enslaved people in 1862. Free and enslaved Black Americans celebrated Watch Night, New Year's Eve 1862, waiting for the Emancipation Proclamation to take effect on January 1, 1863. After the Civil War, the most popular date was September 22, when the proclamation was first issued. Many states celebrated other dates, the best known being June 19, 1865, in Texas (Juneteenth) which became a federal holiday in 2021. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emancipation\\_Day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emancipation_Day))*

## Rural Rest Home Was on a Roll in '53

Rick Nichols

*John Wilkins Roberts was the editor of the Oskaloosa Independent 70 years ago and filed the following story for publication July 16, 1953, after touring one of Jefferson County's out-in-the-country nursing homes. He headlined his piece "Everybody Works At Tidy Hill."*

By invitation of **Mrs. Ruby Smith**, proprietor of Tidy Hill Nursing Home in Fairview township south of Ozawkie, the *Independent* editor and party enjoyed a visit through this interesting and useful institution.

The home has 31 guests and an even larger waiting list of persons wanting admission. Members of this large family include a goodly number of retired residents of Jefferson county, however seven different counties are represented, one member from as far away as Clay Center. Ages are from 94 down to about three score and ten.

Tidy Hill was formerly the **Jesse Worthington** rural home, its location a half mile south of the Pleasant Valley school house. For a country home it was a rather large house of nine rooms. A sizable addition, begun last October and completed late this spring, added twelve rooms. It has two floors with sleeping rooms, women upstairs, men below, two dining-rooms, a long summer porch enclosed.

Mrs. Smith remarks that her home may not be as fancy as some but it is clean and homey, everybody is given something to do each day, no one simply twiddles his thumbs.

**Mr. Smith** and two sons assist her in the housekeeping and there are four guests who also assist with the cooking. Many of the guests are able to care for their own rooms; occupations are provided, such as gardening, care of fowls and of birds and pets, for the men there are games — horseshoes, card games; for the women embroidery and other needlework, scrapbooks, artificial flowers, etc.

In the long porch there is radio and television (chairs are arranged so all may see and hear). In this location, too, there is a Sunday afternoon religious service, with a minister provided, generally through a Lawrence church. There is an occasional dance and "Ruby" reports it is amazing how well these elderly men and ladies can move to music.

For some time she has been providing transportation, with assistance of volunteer neighbors, to stated picnics

at Garfield park. The requirements of Shawnee county folk for these facilities is now making it necessary to discover some place in central Jefferson county at which to hold "parties," to which the guests of other "homes" may be invited. She thinks she has found a place at Oskaloosa for this purpose and if it works out all right, the members of Fairview home & the Meek home would be invited to attend, probably also those from the Joplin home, McLouth.

Another project being considered is a booth at the Topeka Free Fair at which exhibits of handicraft and other demonstrations of "homework" may be shown the public.

Mrs. Smith desires public cooperation in carrying out of these special projects, also welcomes the donation of materials for use within the home, such as games, magazines for cutting and pasting, materials for sewing and other handicraft.

Ruby Smith has the marks of a natural genius for the type of work she is doing. Not educated in a professional sense, she has the knack of common sense and a facility for handling people that seems to come from an innate love for folks. She never puts herself on a pedestal above her guests but counts herself as one of them, mostly they all answer to first names, hence she is "Ruby."

She is acquiring the notice of state workers for ability to manage difficult cases and she herself declares the secret is simply to give disturbed persons something to do, if it be only to care for a pet or even a set of dolls, and to make them feel that they are respected and loved. An interviewer cannot talk with Ruby ten minutes without being impressed with her sincerity and profound love for her task. She admits that it is this love for the work which makes up when the financial going is a bit tough.

## Too Much Is Plenty

*From the Oskaloosa Times, June 12, 1913*

*Contributed by Leanne Chapman*

**Harry Fisher** and **Oscar Roshstein**, held as suspects at the police station, were sent to **Jim Speck**'s farm near Nortonville last week to work as farm hands, but when they put three sets of harness on one mule they were discharged. They said they came from New York. — *Atchison Globe*.

## She Was a Spy of Sorts

By Rick Nichols

The Aug. 13, 1953, issue of *The Oskaloosa Independent* contained a front page story headlined “The Late **Eva Smith** Recalled In Saturday Eve Post Article,” a story that included the paragraph about Oskaloosa native Eva Smith that was part of **John Kobler**’s article “Smugglers are their quarry” for the July 11, 1953, issue of the *Saturday Evening Post*. Smith was the daughter of **James** and **Nancy Smith**, and among her several siblings were the multitalented **Jeanie Davis**, the wife of attorney **Brick Davis**, and **Alice Nowlin**, the wife of longtime educator **Clifford Hiram Nowlin**.

According to the story, the article by Kobler was “descriptive of the work of U.S. Customs agents,” whose ranks had included Smith at an earlier time. In explaining to his readers “the school of instruction” that was conducted for the benefit of these agents, Kobler had this to say:

“Among the most effective operators the school has turned out are members of a select distaff group known as the Lorgnette Squad. The soubriquet derives from the first of them, the late Eva Smith — ‘Little Eva’ to every inspector in the port (of New York) — a tiny but vastly dignified woman who would roam the steamship piers pretending to be a passenger. Dressed to the nines and holding a lorgnette to her eyes, Inspectress Smith seemed to be seeking her luggage. What she actually sought was indications that a gown, fur or jewel worn by a returning tourist had been purchased abroad and was therefore dutiable. The stitching, on most foreign clothes is different from American stitching, for instance. Through her lorgnette — an extra powerful one — the implacable Little Eva could spot the differences at five paces. She could recognize the origin of a fur piece by the shape of the animal’s head or the placement of the eyes. Keeping her ears open, she often overheard whispered remarks like, ‘How do you like the ring Harry bought me in Paris?’ In such cases, an elegant lift of Eva’s eyebrows would bring an inspector on the double. None of her victims ever suspected what had betrayed them. ‘She was sensational,’ says **Kennedy** (head of the Port of New York Customs School). ‘She could mingle with the very best people, and nobody’d be the wiser. Lord knows how much they had to cough up on account of Little Eva.’ Eva’s mantle is shared today by six inspectresses, all of them as dignified of presence as they are acute of observation. The lorgnette squad, they are called.”



From the Perry Mirror, Feb. 23, 1905

ESTABLISHED IN 1860.

**JAMES FARREN,**  
Agent for  
**SINGER'S**  
**CELEBRATED SWING MACHINES!**

The demand for these MACHINES  
is unprecedented in the history of  
sewing Machines. Over

**250,000**  
were sold last year.

It embraces all the essential quali-  
ties, and is pronounced the

**BEST MACHINE IN THE WORLD.**

BUY NO OTHER. TERMS EASY.

It is in this age of Labor Economy a Sewing Machine is an indispensable article  
of the Household. Call on, or address,

**JAMES FARREN, Agent,**  
414 Delaware street, Leavenworth, Kansas.  
**HARVEY WALKER, Traveling Agent for Jefferson County.**

Spot the typo? From the Valley Falls New Era, Apr. 8, 1876



## Desperadoes Strike Nortonville Business, 1881

At about 10 p.m. on Monday, May 30, 1881, three masked men armed with pistols entered **C.C. McCarthy** and **William L. Layson's** dry goods store as it was closing. Layson had gone home for the night. Two clerks, **Julius Pontius** and **F.P. Elmore**, had gone to the train depot. McCarthy and another clerk, **David Stillman**, were making up the day's cash accounts. **Alice McCarthy** and her daughter **Stella** and **Martha Kelley** and her daughter **Effie** were sitting at the counter. Two of the robbers pointed their guns at the women and girls and told them not to move or speak. They told McCarthy and Stillman to put up their hands and move away from the safe. The third robber stood watch by the door, halting **Stephen O'Neil** when he came in and detaining Pontius and Elmore when they returned.

The leader, a small man wearing a red bandana as a mask, began rifling through the safe. He removed about \$1,200 in cash but could not open or remove a fire-proof drawer with an iron door. It contained \$2,000 or \$3,000, funds that McCarthy was holding for other businessmen and farmers.

When the robbers left, they "walked backward to the door, facing those inside, and when at the door told the inmates not to look out doors if they studied their own interests," the *Atchison Daily Champion* reported on June 1. The warning worked. It was about an hour later before the victims reported the robbery at the telegraph office.

McCarthy and Layson, a former detective, interviewed suspects, located witnesses, questioned three men seen driving away from town, and reported their findings to the sheriff. On June 18, the *Winchester Argus* reported, "Two men, **James Dougherty** and **Pete Lyons**, were arrested in Atchison this week, on suspicion of being connected with the Nortonville robbery. Dougherty . . . has for some time been a member of the United States Detective Association. Lyons is the janitor of Corinthian hall." Lyons knew about the robbery but denied taking part. He identified the leader as **Polk "Poke" Wells** and the other two robbers as Dougherty and **J.D. Gilliland**. After a preliminary hearing at the Nortonville school, Dougherty and Gilliland were jailed in Oskaloosa. Lyons testified against them and was released.

Dougherty gave a statement identifying the third robber as **Bill Norris** rather than Gilliland. Dougherty said that, with Wells and Norris, he had hired a horse and buggy in Atchison and driven to Nortonville. They hitched the horse in a back street and waited at the depot before robbing McCarthy's store. Wells robbed the safe while Norris stood in the center of the store holding the occupants at gunpoint. Dougherty watched the door and captured the men who entered. As the robbers were escaping, a neighbor's dog rushed out, and Wells shot it.

Gilliland was exonerated and released in July. He later sued McCarthy and Layson for false imprisonment. His lawsuit was dismissed in December 1884.

In September 1881, **Jim Dougherty** escaped from the Oskaloosa jail. He and another inmate locked the jailor in a cell and ran in opposite directions. Dougherty stole a horse from **Lem Evans** and rode north, pursued by **Abe Newell**. About two miles from town on the bank of Slough Creek, the two men exchanged gunshots. Dougherty sprang from the horse and leapt down a steep 30-foot embankment. He caught the limb of a tree in his fall and escaped from pursuit.

In July 1881, the *Oskaloosa Independent* reported, "A most daring and bloody train robbery took place last night on the Rock Island railroad sixty-five miles out from Leavenworth, at a small station named Winston." **Polk Wells**, still being sought in connection with the Nortonville theft, was suspected of being part of the train robbery along with the **James** gang, but the *Independent* added, "this is mere conjecture."

In August 1881, Wells and Norris robbed a bank in Riverton, Iowa. Wells was shot in the leg and went into hiding in Missouri. In March 1882, the *Valley Falls New Era* reported that Norris and Wells had been captured. Norris was apprehended at a post office in Randolph, Wisconsin, where the pair had fled. Wells was captured after "a terrible hand to hand pistol fight" with an Iowa sheriff, according to the *Valley Falls Register*. "The terrible fight between **Sheriff [Dan] Farrell** of Iowa and **Poke Wells** at the time of the arrest, both opening fire at the same instant, groping around in the small room filled with smoke, finally clenching, falling to the floor, Wells placing the muzzle of his navy [pistol] to the side of Farrell's head, pulling the trigger, the result being only an ugly scalp wound, Farrell then shooting him through and through, was the talk of the country at the time." Wells was seriously wounded but still managed to attempt an escape from a train transporting him to Iowa. He and Norris wounded the officers escorting them but remained in custody. Norris was released, "from some unexplained reason," the *New Era* said, after a jury in Iowa failed to indict him for the bank robbery. Wells was remanded to the Iowa state penitentiary.

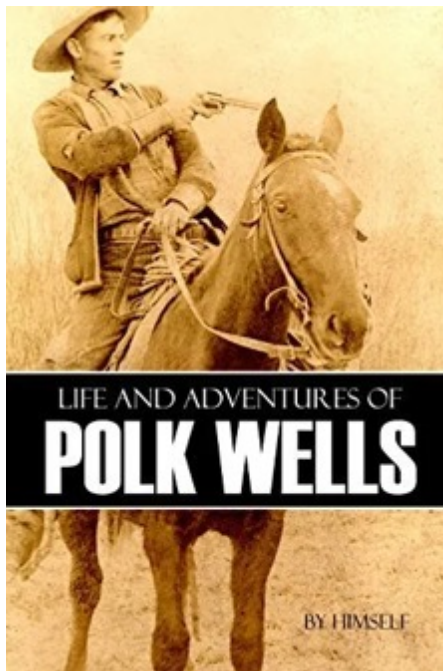
In May 1882, the *Valley Falls Register* reported, "**Polk Wells, George Fitzpatrick** and **Chas. Cook**, confined in the hospital department of the Iowa Penitentiary at Fort Madison, have escaped." The three chloroformed a 73-year-old prison guard, who later died. A farmer near Wever, Iowa, discovered the convicts hiding in his hayloft. He probed the hay with a pitchfork, piercing Wells in the shoulder. Fitzpatrick turned himself in, but Wells and Cook rode off on the farmer's horse. They were captured by another Iowa farmer. The *Valley Falls New Era* said, "The outlaws surrendered at the muzzles of two double-barrel shot-guns." Wells was sentenced to life imprisonment for the death of the guard.

In November 1882, the *New Era* reported, “The notorious **Jim Dougherty**, compatriot of the more notorious **Polk Wells** and **Bill Norris**, who is charged with robbing a store at Nortonville, . . . recently made his appearance at Atchison, and when officers attempted his arrest he drew two revolvers and made good his escape across the river into Missouri.”

In June 1884, Bill Norris was arrested for running a confidence game in Dakota Territory. **C.C. McCarthy** and **A.F. Hardwick** of Atchison traveled to Sioux Falls, armed with a requisition from the governor, and brought Norris back to Kansas. In October, Norris was sentenced to 21 years at hard labor in the state penitentiary at Leavenworth. After sentencing, Norris attempted suicide but survived. Local papers were vindictive. The *Winchester Argus* said, “Norris will probably never come out alive.” The *Valley Falls Register* said, “Thus practically ends the life of a man whose natural bent was murder, whose instincts led to robbery, whose inclinations were those of a desperado, whose general cussedness made him an open, avowed enemy to society and law.” Norris died in prison in February 1885.

A few months after his recapture, Polk Wells declared himself “a changed man” thanks to a prison chaplain. His conversion included writing a self-serving memoir, portraying himself as a gentleman bandit rather than a violent criminal. In November 1885, the *Oskaloosa Independent* reported, “Poke Wells, who it will be remembered, was one of the villains who robbed McCarthy & Layson’s store at Nortonville, and who is serving a long sentence in the Iowa penitentiary, had the cheek to address a letter to Mr. McCarthy lately, in which he stated that he was writing a history of his own life, and he had forgotten some incidents in the Nortonville robbery which he wished Mr. M. to refresh his memory upon! And he wound up by sending his regards to **Mrs. [Alice] McCarthy** for the great ‘nerve’ she had displayed at the time of the robbery! Mrs. M. was present at the time, and certainly acted with much coolness, restraining her husband from an act of resistance which would probably have cost him his life. By-the-way, it is not generally known, but it is a fact, nevertheless, that Jim Dougherty, the only one of the robber band yet at large, was located in New Jersey last fall where he was at work on a railroad, and would have been arrested soon but for the perfidy of the one who heard of the movement and notified Jim in time for him to get out of the way.”

Stories of Dougherty’s capture persisted. McCarthy visited jails in Deadwood, Dakota, in 1889, and Falls City, Nebraska, in 1895, but neither prisoner was Dougherty. In 1895, a vagrant in Kansas City also proved not to be Dougherty.



**William Leonard Layson** died April 18, 1897. He came to Kansas from Missouri in 1876 and to Nortonville in 1877. In addition to the general store he operated with C.C. McCarthy, he was active in the lumber and stock business and later in banking. He is buried in the Nortonville cemetery.

**C.C. McCarthy** died in November 1926. Born in Ireland, he was a Civil War veteran, serving with the Second Ohio Infantry. He operated a general store with W.L. Layson and was president of the Exchange State Bank of Nortonville for 23 years. He is buried in the Nortonville cemetery.

**Charles Knox Polk Wells** died of “consumption” in the Anamosa, Iowa, penitentiary in 1896. His self-aggrandizing memoir, *Life and Adventures of Polk Wells by Himself*, was published posthumously by **Al Warnica**, the second husband of Wells’ ex-wife. Wells claimed to have been hanged by Kansas Jayhawkers, to have ridden with the **James-Younger** gang, and to have met **Kit Carson** and **Wild Bill Hickok**. His body was donated to a medical college, with his instructions to dig out the 27 bullets still in him and give them to Warnica.

— Jane Hoskinson

#### Sources

“A Grave Mistake: The Outlaw Polk Wells,” <http://www.asphistory.com/wells/wells.htm>  
*Anamosa Journal*, Sept. 17, 1896

*Atchison Daily Champion*, June 1, 1881; June 15, 1881; June 17, 1881

*Atchison Daily Globe*, June 14, 1881; July 13, 1881; Aug. 11, 1881; Nov. 8, 1881; Dec. 11, 1895

*Atchison Daily Patriot*, June 1, 1881; June 15, 1881; June 17, 1881; Sept. 19, 1881

*Atchison Weekly Patriot*, June 4, 1881; June 18, 1881; June 25, 1881; Aug. 27, 1881; Dec. 13, 1884

Cutler, William G., *History of the State of Kansas*, pub. A.T. Andreas, Chicago, 1883

*Leavenworth Times*, June 1, 1881; June 17, 1881; June 18, 1881

*Nortonville News*, Dec. 4, 1885; Dec. 25, 1885; Apr. 23, 1897; Mar. 1, 1889

*Oskaloosa Independent*, June 4, 1881; June 25, 1881; July 23, 1881; Sept. 17, 1881; June 21, 1884; Oct. 25, 1884; Feb. 14, 1885; Nov. 28, 1885; Oct. 12, 1895

*Valley Falls New Era*, June 4, 1881; June 18, 1881; June 25, 1881; July 23, 1881; Nov. 12, 1881; Mar. 18, 1882; May 13, 1882; Nov. 4, 1882; Feb. 19, 1885; Dec. 17, 1885; Apr. 21, 1888; Apr. 23, 1897; Nov. 19, 1926

*Valley Falls Register*, June 3, 1881; June 24, 1881; Mar. 3, 1882; May 12, 1882; June 20, 1884; Oct. 24, 1884

*Winchester Argus*, June 4, 1881; June 18, 1881; June 25, 1881; July 30, 1881; Aug. 6, 1881; Oct. 23, 1884

## Early Reminiscences of North-Eastern Kansas in 1857

By Isaac Maris (From the Nortonville News, May 29, 1903)

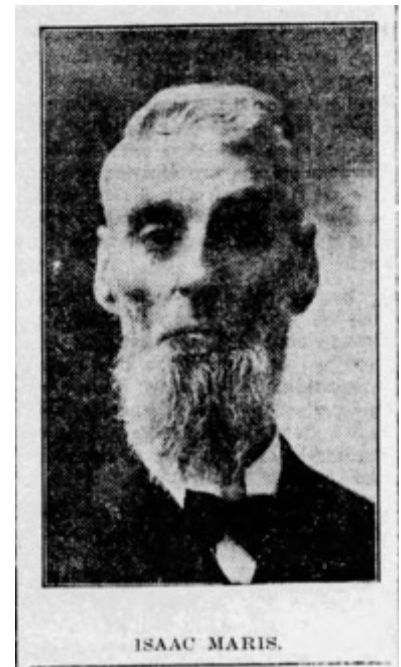
### Chapter I

On Sunday afternoon September 6, 1857, the writer, accompanied by a younger brother, **Caleb**, left the Christian home of our parents, **Jonathan** and **Thomison Maris**, with a family of ten children, eight boys and two girls, situated in Goshen township, Mahoning County, Ohio. As we went up the lane to take the road to Salem, a distance of seven miles, our hearts were very heavy and our eyes filled with tears as we had just said farewell to father and mother, brothers and sisters, perhaps never to see them all again in this world, which came true in regard to my father.

Early Monday morning, September 7, we took the railway train for the beautiful Territory of Kansas, and about nine o'clock that night as we were a few miles out from [LaPorte], Indiana, a broken rail wrecked the train while on quite a high embankment, and rolled the baggage coach and two passenger coaches down the embankment and run broken rails up through our coach, and wrenched all the seats loose. Several were killed in the two coaches ahead of us as it was several hours before we received assistance. On arriving in Chicago we took the Chicago & Alton railroad for Alton, Ill., and on our way something got wrong with the locomotive on one of those beautiful prairies of Illinois, and many of us were off the train and examining the soil, and we were just delighted with it, as it was so black, rich and mellow. On arriving at Alton took the steamboat down the Mississippi river a distance of twenty-five miles for St. Louis remaining there overnight and in the morning took the Missouri Pacific R.R. train for Jefferson City on the Missouri river, the capital of the state and the western terminus of any railroad.

We took the steamboat in the afternoon at that point up the Missouri river for Leavenworth. The river being very low, we made very slow progress, and the passengers had to go on shore a number of times and walk a mile or more at a time that the boat might be lightened that it could never get over the sand bars. Sometime toward morning of September 14, the boat reached Weston, Missouri, as far as it was going up the river.

After breakfast we took the hack for Atchison, a distance of fifteen miles up the river, and our road led along the bottom and through the timber all the way. The four mules and hack were all right but, we had a drunken driver, who annoyed the passengers very much by running so frequently over stumps and logs; and if ever a person needed their life insured it was then and there. We arrived at Atchison near 11:30 a.m. September 14, 1857, with very thankful hearts that our lives had been spared, and our feet again permitted to tread upon the soil. As we looked westward our eyes caught a glance of this beautiful sunny Kansas.



From the Atchison Daily Globe,  
Mar. 24, 1915

MAP OF ATCHISON COUNTY, KANSAS, 1887.



Atchison was very small at that time; only a few business houses clustered along the river. After dinner we started on foot across the prairie in a southwest direction for Ocena [Atchison County] post office located two miles north of where Pardee now is, and there taking the wrong trail got out of our course, had to spend our first night in Kansas with **Archibald Elliott**, living in a little log cabin in the edge of the timber half a mile west of Stranger creek and one and a half miles east of Pardee, on what is now the **John Davis** farm. Mr. Elliott was a white freestate man. [A white freestater opposed slavery in Kansas, but wanted all Black people prohibited from residing in Kansas.]



## The Emigrant's Vision

By Mahlon Oliphant

'Twas autumn eve, the setting sun  
Shone calmly in the west,  
And clothed the woods and streams  
with gold.  
As slow he sank to rest.

A yellow light was on the clouds,  
And with the green earth blent,  
And autumn flowers and balmy breeze,  
Their wildering influence lent.  
And rippling streams and warbling birds  
Were murmuring on the wild,  
And prairie swell and quiet vale  
In pensive beauty smiled.

The vision changed and future years  
Unrolled before his eye;  
The wild was changed to shining fields,  
And home fires lit the sky.

He saw the wilderness transformed  
In all the regions round,  
And cottages and happy homes  
On every hill were found,  
Years passed away; the stranger stood  
Once more on that fair mound,

He came to make him there a home  
An infant state to found.  
And with him stood an army brave,  
Who came as champions stern,  
For freedom's holy cause to stand  
And Slavery's dark wave turn.

Far our proud banner soared aloft  
No more in freedom's sky,  
But o'er its trailing stripes and stars  
The blood red flag rose high.  
Defenseless men in numbers fell  
Before their murderous arm,  
And Lawrence's smoking ruins tell  
Their fearful power to harm.

But liberty's great cause is strong;  
And firm its champions stood  
To save their country and its rights  
They freely shed their blood.

They drove their foeman from the field,  
Their ensign rose on high,  
Resolved in freedom's cause to live,  
Or with the country die.

God will us victory, Kansas yet  
Shall brake the tyrants rod,  
Its blood stained valley yet  
shall be  
The garden of our God.  
There love and hope and peace  
shall dwell,  
And all shall equal be.  
And myriad voices there  
shall swell,  
The anthem of the free

**Isaac Maris**, a young Quaker, came to Kansas Territory in 1857 and settled about three miles north of Nortonville, in Atchison County. He had come from Ohio to help Kansas become a state free of slavery. He married Alma Louise Buten, a Seventh Day Baptist, the year after he arrived. Maris remained a Quaker and his wife a Seventh Day Baptist, but the couple helped organize and guide young peoples' Bible schools and teacher conventions for other Christian branches. He also was called the "the Pioneer Preacher" for his widespread ministry, filling in for preachers of other denominations around Northeast Kansas. He and his neighbors were involved in the Underground Railroad and wrote historically precious letters for the Kansas Historical Society about nearby enslavers, how many slaves they owned, as well as the people who worked to help the enslaved liberate themselves through the Underground Railroad.

**Mahlon Oliphant**, an Ohio abolitionist, moved to Atchison County, Kansas Territory, the same area as Isaac Maris in 1857. He taught at the Springdale (Leavenworth County) Quaker school and lived in other Kansas towns. He published a book of poetry, *Wayside Rhymes*.

— Liz Leech

# JEFFERSON COUNTY, KANSAS



Jefferson County, Kansas, in 1878, from the Oskaloosa Sickle, Aug. 13, 1878

## Millinery on Display at Old Jefferson Town



*Photo courtesy of Jefferson County Historical Society.*

**Gertrude Bauer Cummings** was born in Chase, Rice County, Kansas, April 1, 1887. She married **John R. Cummings** in Nortonville in 1910. She gave private music lessons and operated the Millinery Store in Nortonville, which she purchased in 1916. She died in Valley Falls, October 24, 1975. Some of the hats she created are on display at Old Jefferson Town in the Kilgore Plum Grove Genealogy Library.



*Photo by R. Steve Dick.*

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1916.

All the Ladies of Nortonville  
and Vicinity are invited  
to Attend Our

# Fall Millinery Opening

**Today and Tomorrow,**  
September 29 and 30

**ANOTHER LARGE SHIPMENT OF HATS JUST ARRIVED**

We are showing the same styles as are shown  
in the large cities at much lower prices.  
We do not have to pay high rent; therefore we  
can sell for less, and our customers save what  
is usually added to the cost.

**Our prices range from  
\$1.75 Up.**

Come in and give Us a Call whether you buy or not.

**Mrs. Gertrude Cummings**  
Nortonville, Kansas.

*From the Nortonville News, Sept. 29, 1916*